

Montana and the sky



Department of Transportation - Aeronautics Division

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The Stillwater Express

By: Jim Damron, Columbus

It isn't often that we consider making the dreams of our youth reality. Now and then, however, some of us find the time, money, or emotional honesty to make dreams come true. When I learned to fly at the tender age of 16 in a J-3 Cub, I hatched the idea of flying a Cub from the west coast (where I lived) to the east coast, NON-STOP.

Over the years since 1956 I became the sole proprietor of this scheme as most folks, especially my "rational" elders, ran from the idea for one reason or another. Adults can be like that. It seems that, at least for some of us, the older we get the less we seem to

innovate.

Luckily, the Wright's, the Lindbergh's and the Doolittle's didn't suffer from this problem. One of my favorite sayings is that pilots don't just fly airplanes; they invented them. Fortunately, some people continue to innovate and we must remember to encourage the dreamers. Especially the young ones.

Such was my mood as I prepared my 1949, 90 horse Super-Cub for the non-stop coast-to-coast flight I had dreamed of in my youth. This time I had the right airplane (it would be hard to push J-3 with eyebrow cowls across 2400 miles without buying gas). I had plenty of help in the form of Allen Rickman here in Columbus in modi-



fying the airplane to carry 166 gallons of gas. (Rickman never grew up either). We installed a 90 gallon Sorenson belly tank, a 40 gallon backseat tank and an aux. oil tank up in the cockpit. The whole set-up was too simple to break and it all worked perfectly.

My flight from Santa Maria, CA to St. Simons Is., GA took place on September 12-13 and required 156 gallons of fuel and 27 hours 45 minutes of flying. I took no communication or navigation radios since the FAA has lately asked us to emphasize pilotage. I considered that we have a fellow here in Stillwater County who flies pipeline in a PA-12 and travels farther every week than I did on this whole flight. So far as I know he doesn't even own a navigation radio; probably can't afford one. I bought 8 sectional charts and some Gatorade and let it go at that.

As teachers we are supposed to make hard things look easy. Truth is, any 16 year old kid could have made this flight, and I guess you could say that's really what happened on September 12th.



Al Rickman (left) and Terry Fatzinger (right), mechanics of the Stillwater Express pose with pilot Jim Damron following completion of his successful journey.

Administrator's Column

Weather Observation For Closing Flight Service Stations: The FAA will soon be calling for bids to provide weather observations for Montana Flight Service Stations which are slated to close next spring.

The bids will be to provide weather observations at Cut Bank, Lewistown, Miles City and Livingston, as well as Bozeman and Butte which will remain open but not on a 24-hour basis. The FAA originally planned to have each community bid for the service and then reimburse the community for the cost.

There is however a legal problem with handling it in this manner and they now plan to solicit bids for a contractor to provide the service for all effected Montana Flight Service Stations.



Federal Aviation User Trust Fund: According to the U.S. Treasury, the Aviation User Trust Fund, administered by the FAA, reached a high of \$15.58 billion as of September 1, 1992. Although this balance appears outrageously high, the FAA has about one-half of it committed to eligible airport improvement projects.

The net balance of this trust fund has always been of great concern to me as I feel that if spent as intended there should be no balance. If there is a surplus and intended needs are not being met then there is mismanagement or if intended needs are being met and there is a surplus then we the users are being over taxed.

It is common knowledge that the trust fund has always been held hostage by Federal Administration/Congress to make the federal financial debt picture look better. The other concern I have is that the net balance dangling like a carrot is subject to raid attempts and such is the case in recent attempts to expand eligibility to building highways to airports.



'93 Aviation Conference: As you may know we have began work on the 1993 state-wide combined aviation conference being held February 24-27 in Missoula. Much work has already been accomplished between the Aeronautics Division staff and the Missoula volunteer committee headed up by Kevin Grenier of Aerotronics. Thus far we have commitment from some exciting speakers. Watch for more details on the featured speakers and other exciting programs which will make this conference one of the best. Be sure to mark your calendar and plan to attend. See related article page 7.



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Blaine Resigns

Blaine Meissner, aircraft mechanic, has left the Aeronautics Division to continue his education at Montana State University beginning with the winter semester of 1993.

In the interim, Blaine has returned to the family business at Chester. Good luck Blaine!

Thank you

It's not good-bye! Rather a decision which will allow me time to do some of the things one dreams of. It was a difficult decision to leave such a pleasant job with so many aviation friends. I will miss the day-to-day contact but do hope to see you from time to time.

I cannot possibly thank those of you who made my job so enjoyable because of the help and cooperation you provided to our various programs.

I want to give a special thanks to all of you who have provided so much help over the years in making the Aeronautics Division's air search responsibilities the success that it is...you are too many to list individually but you are all to be commended for the personal effort and dedication you have shown.

I would also like to thank all of the CFIs, school teachers, workshop directors and others who worked so hard to bring aviation education to Montana's young people. I feel this is very important to the survival of our industry.

I must also thank everyone involved in anyway in the recent retirement party — WOW!!, what a "send off!" I never dreamed -THANK YOU ALL - it was wonderful. I will never forget the many good friends, the Aeronautics Division Staff and of course Mike Ferguson for his leadership and dedication to the promotion of aviation in our great state.

Safe and Happy Flying to all of you.

Fred Hasskamp, 3086 Pyfer Rd., Three Forks, MT 59752

New Procedures at Gallatin Field

In order to comply with the new FAR 107.14 procedures, Gallatin Field has designated the area where the airline aircraft operate as a "secured area." This means that GA traffic will now have to be separated from the airline operations on the terminal ramp.

To comply with this rule, "lines of demarcation" will be painted at the entrance taxiways on the terminal ramp. General aviation aircraft and unauthorized vehicles will no longer be allowed on the terminal ramp.

To accommodate GA pilots who wish to get to the terminal, a walkway has been constructed from the old terminal ramp to the employee parking lot. A combination gate there will allow access to and from the ramp. There will also be three new sets of tiedowns installed on the old terminal ramp for GA pilots who need to go to the terminal.

Should the pilot choose to park on the GA ramp, both Arlin's Aircraft Service and Sunbird Aviation will be happy to provide ground transportation to and from the terminal.

Congressman Hammerschmidt Receives Award

Arkansas Congressman Hammerschmidt has been presented the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association's 1992 Joseph B. Hartranft, Jr. Public Service Award which is given annually to an elected or appointed official who has made significant contributions to general aviation advancement.

Congressman Hammerschmidt, the ranking Republican on the House Public Works and Transportation Committee, is among the most respected and effective members of Congress on aviation issues. He is a long-time supporter of general aviation and has consistently taken the lead on issues important to AOPA members.

Calendar

Jan. 26-28—AMAA Convention, Heritage Inn, Great Falls.

Feb. 5-7, 1993—Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic, Helena.

Feb. 24-27, 1993—Montana Aviation Conference, Holiday Inn, Missoula.

March 1-3, 1993—Upper Midwest Aviation Symposium, Bismarck, North Dakota.



Meet Nancy

Nancy Trudell has just become the Manager of the Helena Flight Standards District Office in Helena. She began flying in Phoenix, AZ, where she instructed in both fixed wing and helicopters.

Eventually she moved to the San Diego area where she was a Designated Pilot Examiner and an Accident Prevention Counselor for seven years.

Her assignments with the FAA have included Assistant Office Manager, Section Supervisor, Unit Supervisor, Regional Specialist, Accident Prevention Program Manager, and Principal Operations Inspector.

She has been located at the Van Nuys FSDO, the Salt Lake City FSDO, the Long Beach FSDO, and the Western-Pacific Regional Office. Nancy has a Master's Degree in Administration and is currently working on a Ph.D. in Management.

MPA Fall Fly-in



The Montana Pilots Association (MPA) annual fall fly-in was held September 11-13 at Glasgow, reminiscing are Pete Pederson and Herb Sammons.



Valley Hangars "Grand Old Men of Aviation" include from l to r: O.E. Markle, Buster Redfield, Vic Wokal and Mitch Etchart. The "youngster" in the cowboy hat is Bob Lipscomb, President, MPA Valley Hangar.



A future aspiring aviator Aaron Hanson and mom Jamie.



An aerobatic air show was enjoyed by all. The presenters were Mitch Etchart of Glasgow in his Great Lakes and Larry French of Wolf Point in his Christian Eagle.



The "Oldest Pilot Award" went to Vic Wokal of Glasgow. Vic is pictured here with wife Eva and Bob Lipscomb.



Bill Pratt, Peggy Lipscomb, Bob Lipscomb and Esther Egan take a break and wait for the music to begin.

14th Annual Mountain Search Pilot Clinic



Participants are welcomed to the 14th annual Mountain Search Pilot Clinic held September 18-20, where each received instruction in search techniques, survival and mountain flying.



Two hours of dual flight instruction is provided to each participant. The clinic offers training to 30 Montana pilots who volunteer to be a part of the Division's search and rescue network. Flight instructors were Fred Hasskamp, Bill Stewart, Stan Read, Bill Werner, Glen Parmeter and Wayne Turner.



Chuck Thuot (pictured above) and Jeff Hogan, Emergency Response Institute, Cashmere, Washington instructed pilots in survival techniques.

The clinic offers a very rigorous schedule. Everyone looks forward to grabbing a bite to eat, relaxing, and chatting with old friends and new acquaintances.



Sergeant Roland Lis, Air Rescue Coordination Center, Scott Air Force Base, briefed pilots on the Center's activities and responsibilities.



Above: Jeff Hogan demonstrates what survival equipment is best to use in an emergency situation and why.

Right: Will Mavis and Hugh Wilkins provided ELT homer instruction for students. Many thanks to those who participated and you who helped make the clinic a success.



Aerotronics Celebrates 30 years

To celebrate its 30th year in business, Aerotronics in Billings hosted an open house on September 26.

In conjunction with the open house a GPS Expo was conducted. Representatives from Arnav, Garmin, Trimble and II Morrow participated. The GPS Expo moved across the state where it was co-hosted by Rocky Mountain Air at Great Falls and Morrison Flying Service at Helena. The Expo completed its tour at Aerotronics in Missoula.

Aerotronics is owned and operated by Martin Elshire and Steve Vold both of Billings. Aerotronics III at Missoula is managed by Kevin Grenier.

On October 17, Martin celebrated his 25th anniversary with Aerotronics, having joined the company in 1967. Aerotronics was originally founded in 1962 by Dick Van Luchene.



These dedicated Aerotronics employees flip burgers to serve to open house attendees.



Laura Daniel assists Martin Elshire in choosing a lucky raffle winner.



Ralph Fisch, a Garmin representative from Kansas City, demonstrates a GPS to this interested party.

Columbus Fly-in Celebrates Discovery

A Columbus Discovery Celebration and Fly-in sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce was held September 26 at Columbus. Activities included a glider demonstration, flying contests, airplane rides, and radio-controlled model airplane flying. A hangar dance and food was enjoyed by all.

A highlight of the fly-in was the return flight of the "Stillwater Express" from its coast-to-coast adventure. See story page 1.



CAP Hold Search & Rescue Training

Each year Civil Air Patrol's (CAP) Montana Wing Headquarters holds search and rescue training exercises (SARX) at towns located throughout the State of Montana. At least one of these training exercises is evaluated by high ranking officers from the United States Air Force.

This year, as search and rescue personnel attached to CAP's Montana Wing converged in Lewistown on August 29-30 no less than five Air Force officers ranging from a major to a full "bird" colonel participated in the evaluation.

Fifty-seven members participated in the training, including five cadets. This exercise is generally considered the most important training exercise of the year because the capabilities of CAP's entire Wing are evaluated.

The mission headquarters operated out of hangar space provided by Skycraft, Inc., a local business on the Lewistown Airport. Eleven CAP aircraft were deployed for the exercise. The search and rescue ground teams were fielded by the Central Montana Search and Rescue volunteers and the Fergus County Sheriff's Department.

CAP is made up of volunteer pilots, amateur radio operators, aviation enthusiasts, educators and other concerned citizens. There are about 500 members in Montana's Wing attached to thirteen local units.

For more information about Civil Air Patrol in Montana write to Montana Wing-Civil Air Patrol, ATTN: Montana Wing Commander, P.O. Box 1887, Great Falls, MT 59403-1887.

FAA Joins AOPA in Lawsuit

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association applauded FAA's joining AOPA in a product liability lawsuit pending in the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The Bush Administration authorized the FAA to file the friend of the court brief in a case which involves allegations that the "taildragger" design of the venerable Piper Cub aircraft is inherently dangerous and defective.

The FAA's brief very forcefully asserts that design approvals are the province of the FAA and safety decisions such as these should not be second-guessed by the court. The FAA has sent a clear message that it will defend its airworthiness decisions. The message, if received, will have a far-reaching impact on numerous aircraft liability claims.

The *Cleveland v. Piper* case stems from an incident involving an airport worker deliberately driving a truck onto a runway in front of a departing aircraft to stop the takeoff. The pilot was severely injured and the jury made a multi-million dollar award to the plaintiffs.

Piper appealed the case which alleged the classic Piper Cub design, because of its tail wheel, was flawed due to limited forward visibility and lack of a shoulder harness.

Calibration Fly-in

Ag aviation operators met in Lewistown, September 10-11 for their annual spray check. Fourteen aircraft registered to check droplet size, deposition and swath width. The clinic was sponsored by the Association of Montana Aerial Applicators (AMAA).

A video tape of each aircraft was made with the aircraft being flown directly toward and away from the camera. This allows the water being dispersed from the booms to show up well on the TV and allows the pilot to make adjustments to the aircraft.

The AMAA Convention will be held January 26-28 at the Heritage Inn at Great Falls.

Missoula—Home of the 1993 Montana Aviation Conference

Kevin Grenier
1993 Aviation Host

We are on the final approach for the 1993 Montana Aviation Conference being held in Missoula, February 24-27 at the Holiday Inn - Parkside.

The Conference Committee and I have planned a fun-filled, entertaining education and recertification conference.

Missoula has something for everyone; friends, family members and spouses. The restaurants and shopping throughout the Missoula area have grown.

The list of speakers and concurrent sessions are coming together. Some of the main speakers are FAA Administrator, Thomas C. Richards and Major Rhonda Cornum, PhD, MD and helicopter pilot.

On a helicopter rescue mission in Iraq, she was shot down, captured and held prisoner of war. Major Cornum is also an author. We also express excitement that Dr. Gerald Cockrell will be returning to the Montana Conference.

We will have dancing for Saturday night, so get your dancing shoes out of the closet and polished. Keep the right attitude and altitude, we are looking forward to seeing all of you in Missoula. Make your plans and reservations early.

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